


patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the first patient;

comparing the patient identifier of the first prescription data record to the patient identifier of each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records to find a pre-stored prescription data record having a patient identifier matching the patient identifier of the first prescription data record;

determining whether the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record is related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record;

identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a new therapy start for the first patient if the drug identifier of the first prescription data record is not related to the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record.



21. (New) The method of claim 20, where the step of determining comprises identifying the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record as being related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record matches the drug identifier of the first prescription data record.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, where a drug identifier is of one of two types, one type of drug identifier being an identifier to a brand name drug and the other type of drug identifier being an identifier to a generic drug corresponding to a brand name drug, and where the step of determining comprises:

prior to the step of identifying, if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record and the drug identifier of the first prescription data record are not of the same type, converting either the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record or the drug identifier of the first prescription data record to the other type of drug identifier.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, where a database provides a correspondence between brand name drugs and their corresponding generic drugs, and where the step of converting comprises:

a) if the drug identifier being converted is of the type that identifies a brand name drug, searching the database to find the generic drug corresponding to the brand name drug identified by the drug identifier being converted and modifying the drug identifier being converted to identify the found generic drug; and

if the drug identifier being converted is of the type that identifies a generic drug, searching the database to find the brand name drug corresponding to the generic drug identified by the drug identifier being converted and modifying the drug identifier being converted to identify the found brand name drug.

24. (New) The method of claim 20, where the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records are collected over a predetermined time interval.

25. (New) The method of claim 20, where each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the respective record was dispensed and a drug dosage describing the dosage prescribed for the drug being prescribed of the respective record, and where the first prescription data record further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record was dispensed, and where the method further comprises:

if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record is related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record, calculating a last day the drug being prescribed of the matching pre-stored prescription data record was taken based on the dispensing date and drug dosage for the drug being prescribed of the matching pre-stored prescription data record;

GI determining a length of time between the last day calculated and the dispensing date of the drug being prescribed of the first prescribed data record; and

identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a new therapy start for the first patient if the length of time determined exceeds a predetermined time interval.

26. (New) A computer implemented method for processing prescription data using a plurality of pre-stored prescription data records, each of which comprises a patient identifier identifying a patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the identified patient of the respective record, the method comprising:

receiving a first prescription data record comprising a patient identifier identifying a first

patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the first patient;

comparing the patient identifier of the first prescription data record to the patient identifier of each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records to find all pre-stored prescription data records having a patient identifier matching the patient identifier of the first prescription data record;

identifying all the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record;

for each matching pre-stored prescription data record, identifying all the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the respective pre-stored prescription data record; and

determining whether the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record is a therapy switch based on the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription and the illnesses treatable by any drug being prescribed of any of the matching pre-stored prescription data records.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, where a database lists the illnesses treatable by drugs, and where the step of identifying all the illnesses treatable by a drug being prescribed comprises:

for a given drug being prescribed, searching the database to find the given drug; and
identifying all the illnesses listed in the database as treatable by the found drug.

26. (New) The method of claim 26, where the step of determining comprises identifying the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record as a therapy switch if any illness treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record matches any illness treatable by any drug being prescribed of any of the matching pre-stored prescription data records.

28. (New) The method of claim 26, where each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the respective record was dispensed and a drug dosage describing the dosage prescribed for the drug being prescribed of the respective record, and where the first prescription data record further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record was dispensed, and where the step of determining comprises:

identifying one of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records where the drug being prescribed of the identified record treats an illness that the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record also treats;

calculating a last day the drug being prescribed of the identified record was taken based on the dispensing date and drug dosage for the drug being prescribed of the identified record;

determining a length of time between the last day calculated and the dispensing date of the drug being prescribed of the first prescribed data record; and

identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a therapy switch for the first patient if the length of time determined does not exceed a predetermined time interval.

29. (New) A computer system for processing prescription data using a plurality of pre-stored prescription data records, each of which comprises a patient identifier identifying a patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the identified patient of the respective record, the system comprising:

means for receiving a first prescription data record comprising a patient identifier identifying a first patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the first patient;

means for comparing the patient identifier of the first prescription data record to the patient identifier of each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records to find a pre-stored prescription data record having a patient identifier matching the patient identifier of the first prescription data record;

means for determining whether the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record is related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record;

means for identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a new therapy start for the first patient if the drug identifier of the first prescription data record is not related to the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record.

30. (New) The system of claim 29, where the means for determining identifies the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record as being related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored

prescription data record matches the drug identifier of the first prescription data record.

31. (New) The system of claim 30, where a drug identifier is of one of two types, one type of drug identifier being an identifier to a brand name drug and the other type of drug identifier being an identifier to a generic drug corresponding to a brand name drug, and where the means for determining comprises:

means for converting either the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record or the drug identifier of the first prescription data record to the other type of drug identifier if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record and the drug identifier of the first prescription data record are not of the same type.

91 32. (New) The system of claim 31, where a database provides a correspondence between brand name drugs and their corresponding generic drugs, and

where the means for converting searches the database to find the generic drug corresponding to the brand name drug identified by the drug identifier being converted and modifies the drug identifier being converted to identify the found generic drug if the drug identifier being converted is of the type that identifies a brand name drug, and

where the means for converting searches the database to find the brand name drug corresponding to the generic drug identified by the drug identifier being converted and modifies the drug identifier being converted to identify the found brand name drug if the drug identifier being converted is of the type that identifies a generic drug.

33. (New) The system of claim 29, where the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records are collected over a predetermined time interval.

34. (New) The system of claim 29, where each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the respective record was dispensed and a drug dosage describing the dosage prescribed for the drug being prescribed of the respective record, and where the first prescription data record further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record was dispensed, and where the system further comprises:

all means for calculating a last day the drug being prescribed of the matching pre-stored prescription data record was taken based on the dispensing date and drug dosage for the drug being prescribed of the matching pre-stored prescription data record if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record is related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record;

means for determining a length of time between the last day calculated and the dispensing date of the drug being prescribed of the first prescribed data record; and

means for identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a new therapy start for the first patient if the length of time determined exceeds a predetermined time interval.

35. (New) A computer system for processing prescription data using a plurality of pre-stored prescription data records, each of which comprises a patient identifier identifying a patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the identified patient of the respective record, the system comprising:

means for receiving a first prescription data record comprising a patient identifier identifying a first patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the first patient;

means for comparing the patient identifier of the first prescription data record to the patient identifier of each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records to find all pre-stored prescription data records having a patient identifier matching the patient identifier of the first prescription data record;

91 means for identifying all the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record;

means for identifying, for each matching pre-stored prescription data record, all the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the respective pre-stored prescription data record; and

means for determining whether the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record is a therapy switch based on the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription and the illnesses treatable by any drug being prescribed of any of the matching pre-stored prescription data records.

36. (New) The system of claim 35, where a database lists the illnesses treatable by drugs, and where the means for identifying all the illnesses treatable by a drug being prescribed comprises:

means for searching the database, for a given drug being prescribed, to find the given drug; and

means for identifying all the illnesses listed in the database as treatable by the found drug.

37. (New) The system of claim 35, where the means for determining identifies the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record as a therapy switch if any illness treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record matches any illness treatable by any drug being prescribed of any of the matching pre-stored prescription data records.

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38. (New) The system of claim 35, where each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the respective record was dispensed and a drug dosage describing the dosage prescribed for the drug being prescribed of the respective record, and where the first prescription data record further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record was dispensed, and where the means for determining comprises:

means for identifying one of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records where the drug being prescribed of the identified record treats an illness that the drug being prescribed

of the first prescription data record also treats;

means for calculating a last day the drug being prescribed of the identified record was taken based on the dispensing date and drug dosage for the drug being prescribed of the identified record;

means for determining a length of time between the last day calculated and the dispensing date of the drug being prescribed of the first prescribed data record; and

means for identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a therapy switch for the first patient if the length of time determined does not exceed a predetermined time interval.

39. (New) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code embodied therein, the computer readable code, when executed, causing a computer to implement a method for processing prescription data using a plurality of pre-stored prescription data records, each of which comprises a patient identifier identifying a patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the identified patient of the respective record, the method comprising:

receiving a first prescription data record comprising a patient identifier identifying a first patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the first patient;

comparing the patient identifier of the first prescription data record to the patient identifier of each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records to find a pre-stored prescription data record having a patient identifier matching the patient identifier of the first prescription data record;

determining whether the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record is related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record;

identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a new therapy start for the first patient if the drug identifier of the first prescription data record is not related to the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record.

40. (New) The computer program product of claim 39, where the step of determining comprises identifying the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record as being related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record matches the drug identifier of the first prescription data record.

91 41. (New) The computer program product of claim 39, where a drug identifier is of one of two types, one type of drug identifier being an identifier to a brand name drug and the other type of drug identifier being an identifier to a generic drug corresponding to a brand name drug, and where the step of determining comprises:

prior to the step of identifying, if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record and the drug identifier of the first prescription data record are not of the same type, converting either the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record or the drug identifier of the first prescription data record to the other type of drug identifier.

42. (New) The computer program product of claim 39, where a database provides a correspondence between brand name drugs and their corresponding generic drugs, and where the step of converting comprises:

if the drug identifier being converted is of the type that identifies a brand name drug, searching the database to find the generic drug corresponding to the brand name drug identified by the drug identifier being converted and modifying the drug identifier being converted to identify the found generic drug; and

if the drug identifier being converted is of the type that identifies a generic drug, searching the database to find the brand name drug corresponding to the generic drug identified by the drug identifier being converted and modifying the drug identifier being converted to identify the found brand name drug.

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43. (New) The computer program product of claim 39, where the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records are collected over a predetermined time interval.

44. (New) The computer program product of claim 39, where each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the respective record was dispensed and a drug dosage describing the dosage prescribed for the drug being prescribed of the respective record, and where the first prescription data record further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the first

prescription data record was dispensed, and where the method further comprises:

if the drug identifier of the matching pre-stored prescription data record is related to the drug identifier of the first prescription data record, calculating a last day the drug being prescribed of the matching pre-stored prescription data record was taken based on the dispensing date and drug dosage for the drug being prescribed of the matching pre-stored prescription data record;

determining a length of time between the last day calculated and the dispensing date of the drug being prescribed of the first prescribed data record; and

identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a new therapy start for the first patient if the length of time determined exceeds a predetermined time interval.

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45. (New) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code embodied therein, the computer readable code, when executed, causing a computer to implement a method for processing prescription data using a plurality of pre-stored prescription data records, each of which comprises a patient identifier identifying a patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the identified patient of the respective record, the method comprising:

receiving a first prescription data record comprising a patient identifier identifying a first patient and a drug identifier identifying a drug being prescribed to the first patient;

comparing the patient identifier of the first prescription data record to the patient identifier of each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records to find all pre-stored

prescription data records having a patient identifier matching the patient identifier of the first prescription data record;

identifying all the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record;

for each matching pre-stored prescription data record, identifying all the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the respective pre-stored prescription data record; and

determining whether the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record is a therapy switch based on the illnesses treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription and the illnesses treatable by any drug being prescribed of any of the matching pre-stored prescription data records.

41 46. (New) The computer program product of claim 45, where a database lists the illnesses treatable by drugs, and where the step of identifying all the illnesses treatable by a drug being prescribed comprises:

for a given drug being prescribed, searching the database to find the given drug; and
identifying all the illnesses listed in the database as treatable by the found drug.

47. (New) The computer program product of claim 45, where the step of determining comprises identifying the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record as a therapy switch if any illness treatable by the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record

matches any illness treatable by any drug being prescribed of any of the matching pre-stored prescription data records.

48. (New) The computer program product of claim 45, where each of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the respective record was dispensed and a drug dosage describing the dosage prescribed for the drug being prescribed of the respective record, and where the first prescription data record further comprises a dispensing date on which the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record was dispensed, and where the step of determining comprises:

al identifying one of the plurality of pre-stored prescription data records where the drug being prescribed of the identified record treats an illness that the drug being prescribed of the first prescription data record also treats;

calculating a last day the drug being prescribed of the identified record was taken based on the dispensing date and drug dosage for the drug being prescribed of the identified record;

determining a length of time between the last day calculated and the dispensing date of the drug being prescribed of the first prescribed data record; and

identifying the drug being prescribed to the first patient as a therapy switch for the first patient if the length of time determined does not exceed a predetermined time interval.
